

2 May 1957 TAB B

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS CONCERNING PROJECT

AQUATONE/OILSTONE

The paper on AQUATONE prepared for submission to higher authority contains a brief account of the current status of the Project and plans for operations during the current season together with a request for permission to initiate such operations. All other issues were excluded in order to focus attention on the major decision required at this time. It was agreed, however, in conversations with representatives of the Air Force that the following additional matters be discussed orally with the political authorities along the lines indicated under each heading.

1. Alternative Lower Priority Targets: If authority cannot now be granted to overfly some or all of the highest priority targets in the USSR, it is important to determine whether: (a) Overflights of the following lower priority areas (listed in order of priority) should now be conducted: (1) Specified peripheral areas of the USSR, (2) China, (3) European Satellites; or (b) There is a sufficient prospect of receiving at a later date authority for overflights of the USSR to warrant postponing operations over lower priority areas.

2. The RAINBOW Program: During the last nine months significant progress has been achieved through this Project in the development of radar camouflage. It is believed that the radar reflectivity of the U-2 aircraft can be so reduced as to create a good chance that a majority of overflight missions will avoid detection entirely. Nevertheless, it must be anticipated that at least a certain proportion of them will be detected, although their continuous tracking should be extremely difficult. Our plan is to equip the U-2 aircraft with this protection if and as it is operationally developed. If it is effective, it will reduce not only the likelihood of detection and tracking but also the possibility of interception even after the Soviets have developed aircraft or missiles capable of operating at extreme altitudes.

3. Maintenance of a Non-Military Overflight Capability: The principal reason for developing the AQUATONE capability originally within a CIA framework (but as a joint Air Force/CIA Project) rather than in the Air Force was to maintain greater security, employ deeper cover, use civilian pilots, keep the aircraft outside of military control, and therefore, make possible more plausible denial of U. S. military responsibility in the face of any Soviet charges. It can be argued that an operation of this

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Copy 6 of 6

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character can be conducted as securely by military units operating under military cover as by the Clandestine Service, that the distinction between military and civilian control is irrelevant to the possibility of denial and therefore that this tool is politically no more useable for overflights in the hands of the Clandestine Service than in the regular military establishment. The issue did not concern the actual capabilities of the Clandestine Service and the military establishment but rather the views of the political authorities of our Government. The question is whether they believe that the use of this equipment for overflights by the Clandestine Service will give rise to lesser risks of embarrassment or counter-action than its use by a tactical military arm. In order to forestall a debate as to whether this is their view, it is highly desirable to pose the question and seek as clear an answer as possible. If this does turn out to be their view, it is proposed that the present joint operation be continued through 1958, probably with some changes in organization and cover and somewhat reduced in scale, and that meanwhile, the parallel military capability be developed separately. If, however, the political authorities believe the risks are the same for non-military as for military operations, then it is proposed that the CIA's equipment be transferred to the Air Force at the end of the current reconnaissance season.

4. Proposed Modification of Operational Concept: If the present joint project organized within a CIA framework is continued beyond the present season, consideration will be given to the following modifications of present operational concepts. Their purpose would be to reduce the political hazards to which overflights give rise or to be prepared for unfavorable political developments and thus to render the U-2 capability politically more useable.

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b. The modification of a few of the Agency's aircraft to permit basing them on an aircraft carrier and thereby to avoid

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1- DCE for Hester - 2 May 57
2- Destroyed
3- Col. Secy - separate report.
4- Destroyed
5- Pro. Dir. Chrono
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